

Petition S3-0001-0500, filed on behalf of Maine wild blueberry producers.

Background:

On October 22, 2003, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announced that producers of wild blueberries in Maine were eligible to apply for benefits under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers program as the result of a petition filed by the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine. The FAS Administrator found that imports of frozen wild blueberries had contributed importantly to a 33-percent decline in the domestic producer price during the 2002 marketing year (July 2002 - June 2003), when compared with the previous 5-year average.

In order for TAA benefits to remain in place for a subsequent year, the TAA regulation specifies that the Administrator shall determine whether or not further increases in imports contributed importantly to a 20-percent or more decline in producer prices from the original 5-year base period. This determination is made prior to the anniversary of the initial certification

Analysis:

USDA evaluated producer prices for wild Maine blueberries compiled by the New England Agricultural Statistics Service, a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service of USDA. The data revealed that Maine producers received an average price of \$0.35 per pound during the 2003 marketing year (July 2003 - June 2004). The average price for the base period (MY 1997-2001) was \$0.42 per pound. The 2003 average price was 83.3 percent of that for the base period, indicating a decline of 16.7 percent from the base period.

Reason for denial of petition:

To qualify for TAA, the producer price of a commodity must decline by more than 20 percent from the average for the base period. Consequently, the petition was not re-certified, and notice was published in the Federal Register on October 8, 2004.